LOUISIANA CHAPTER
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BLACK MAYORS

An affiliate of the National Conference of Black Mayors
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Michael K. Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

MB Docket No. 04-207

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to urge you to not support the "a la carte" cable system currently being debated in Congress. Its implementation would reduce or eliminate programming aimed at minority groups.

Channels like BET, Telemundo, TV One and ESPN Deportes have succeeded under the current cable system in large part due to the way in which they were introduced: through bundling. When a new network is introduced, it is usually placed in a bundle with existing ad-supported popular channels, such as CNN, ESPN or Nickelodeon, allowing viewers the opportunity to try out the new channel. If consumers find the channels interesting, the channel will gain its own audience and enough advertising revenue to become profitable.

Under the "a la carte" system, where viewers pay separately for each channel, there is little likelihood that consumers will spend their money on channels about which they have little knowledge. A new network will have no opportunity to build an audience and become successful. This will also result in higher expenses for channels that remain.

Thus, the channels that appeal to more specialized audiences, particularly ethnic, foreign-language and niche programming, would have trouble attracting enough

subscribers to survive. Ultimately, this situation would result in generic and low quality programming aimed at the majority. The minority voice would be silenced in the "a la carte" system.

I implore you to reject the "a la carte" system. Help keep diverse programming on the air.

Sincerely,

Maurice A. Brown, President